THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8 May, 1926 Number 5

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - Page 259
MAY DAY, 1926

The Coal Report and After - - - „ 272
By ARTHUR HORNER

Shooting Niagara - - - - - - „ 284
By R. PAGE ARNOT

The Geneva Fiasco - - - - - „ 288
By W. N. EWER

Teachers and the Class Struggle - - - „ 296
By A. M. A.

Italy To-day - - - - - - - „ 304
By L. W.

The Importance of the Trades Councils - „ 313
By TOM QUELCH

The World of Labour - - - - „ 318
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NOTES of the MONTH

May Day—Prospects—New Reformist Illusions—What If—Speculation or Marxism—New Technical Processes—The Real Lesson—Contrast to Industrial Revolution—From Locarno to Geneva—America and Europe—Chinese National Struggle—China and Revolution—Capitalist Offensive—The American Myth—Whither America?—Facing Realities—The Immediate Crisis

MAY Day, the day of the workers' unity for action, falls this year at a moment when that unity is required more than ever before. It was no doubt without forethought that the Government, in fixing the nine months term of the subsidy, fixed the date of its expiry, and therefore by implication the date of the launching anew of the postponed offensive against the working class, to fall on International Labour Day. But the omen is one that may well be taken up by the working class. The capacity of the working class for united action is about to be tested more seriously than ever before. "Red Friday" was only a first round. Whatever the manoeuvres or postponements, both sides know that the inevitable conflict is in front. The Government may talk of peace; but their acts of preparation and mobilisation belie their words. No fair words or tricks can get round the realities of the coal situation. The coal crisis is itself only the acutest part of the whole crisis of Capitalism and the working class in Britain. And the crisis of Capitalism in Britain is only the acutest part of the whole crisis of Capitalism in the post-war world. May Day should therefore see the concentration and unification of the working class ranks all over the world for the enlarging period of struggles that is developing.

THERE are those who argue that Capitalism is recovering, and there are therefore no inevitable struggles in front. This argument is the obvious cover for the retreat into Reformism, and the refusal to face the tremendous issues that are confronting the working class. It is an argument that flies in the

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face of the facts. Does the situation in Britain show recovery? Do the figures of production, trade, unemployment or wages show recovery? Does the position of the miners and the engineers, and the rock-bottom fight developing show recovery? Do the government preparations, the Communist trials, the police and military extensions, the O.M.S., the growth of the Minority Movement to a quarter of the Trades Union Congress, the concentration of wage issues to a single confrontation of Capitalism and the working class, show a weakening or intensifying of class antagonism in Britain? And internationally, has the stabilisation of Dawes and Locarno made progress or shown any power of permanence? Does the collapse of Geneva and the growing hostility of the United States and Europe show a diminution of capitalist antagonisms? Does the gigantic national struggle in China, do the wars in Syria and Morocco and the gathering unrest in India hold out the prospect of a smooth progression for world Capitalism? These are facts: and whoever wishes to hold out a lying prospect of a peaceful period before the working class must first deal with these facts. The revolutionary perspective is based, not on psychology or romanticism (as the vulgar reformists suppose), but on the consideration of objective facts, which hold out no alternative to the working class but a process of hard and increasing struggle in the present period.

WHAT is the basis of the new Reformism which holds out the propaganda of capitalist strength and recovery (new inventions and reorganisation, the economy of high wages, the American example, &c.) at the moment of the intensest conflict of the workers, when Capitalism is in fact driving down the standards of the workers to the lowest point? The old Reformism before the war had by comparison a superficial basis of facts on which to build, and only failed to understand the deeper tendencies of capitalism. It forgot the future in the present, and failed even to analyse correctly the present. But the new Reformism in the post-war world of capitalist decline is only able to live by a complete disregard of the present, and on the basis of a rose-coloured illusion of an imaginary future of capitalist harmony, with all the contradictions and antagonisms left out, and without

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any relation to the actual working class struggle to-day. These theorists are actually at present discussing whether Capitalism may not be able too rapidly to satisfy the " mere material needs " of the masses before Socialism can establish its ideal—at a moment when in reality Capitalism is driving down the masses to poverty unequalled in their experience. This type of theory is so completely divorced from the actual struggle of the workers that it would not be worth discussing, were it not the only alternative and opposition, however feeble, to the plain revolutionary lead of united working class struggle with all the forces of capitalism, which the present period requires.

" WHAT if," writes one of these prophets of the rejuvenation of British Capitalism—

> What if international finance scaled down still further German reparation payments, and if Wall Street and the City agreed, as already has been done in the case of Italy, to compound for smaller cash sums in settlement of war debts ? European industry could then go ahead comparatively unburdened with bankers' mortgages.

" Comparatively." The fact that war-debt and reparations negotiations have been above all a lever for establishing a private hold on European industry (the total Dawes Loan was £40 millions, but American private investments in Germany already total £200 millions and are still increasing rapidly—the same process can be traced in the Italian negotiations) and that American private investments in Europe already total two and a half thousand million dollars, is left out of consideration.

> What if the British Capitalists, seeing the red light, put through the unification of the British coalfields and got an international agreement on coal production to prevent undercutting ?
>
> What if they linked up coal with the electrical and chemical industry and made coal a basis for fuel, agricultural manures, dye-stuffs and explosives ?

Then comes the grand conclusion to which all this is intended to lead :—

> I venture to say that then we should be on the eve of a new industrial revolution, and the British Communist Movement would disappear in vapour just as Chartism faded away in the smoke of the steam engines, blast furnaces and collieries which covered and ran over England on the eve of the Victorian industrial revolution.

Not so fast. The wish is here too openly father to the thought.

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Communism is not so easily to be exercised by a pipe-dream of " What Ifs."

ON this line of argument it is necessary to make one or two comments. The method of argument illustrated in the writer's " What If " is an interesting and often fruitful form of imagining known as Speculation, but it is not a Marxist method of thinking and seriously estimating a situation. The Marxist method, to begin with, bases itself on facts. It does not, for example, argue from a string of speculative hypotheses to the conclusion that Communism is bound to disappear, when the objective fact is that Communism in England is growing daily stronger at present at a very striking rate ; on the contrary it is much more interested in the fact and its explanation. In the next place it bases itself on all the facts, on all the opposing tendencies and forces and their points of conflict, and only from the sum-total of these, and above all from the points of conflict, draws its deductions for the future. This applies most clearly to the Marxist analysis of Capitalism, where the whole essence of the Marxist method consists in the power to see the contradictions, and the whole character of reformist philistinism and revisionism is the inability to see the contradictions. Now it is to be noted that the whole of the writer's " What Ifs " are of one type only : they all assume the success of capitalist reorganisation, modification, overcoming of difficulties, unification, &c. But they leave out of account completely all the larger conflicts, antagonisms, inequalities and contradictions which form the real web of the capitalist structure. And this invalidates the whole argument.

NO less important is the actual basis of the argument. The main force of the argument as a whole is that the technical advance of production—" new scientific inventions "—is able to give Capitalism a new lease of life in the same way as the Industrial Revolution heralded a vast expansion of Capitalism.

> Who will deny that we may not be on the eve of such a momentous economic change, which may make it easier for the bosses to buy off the workers in the new industrial processes with more favour-

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> able conditions than those which they afforded to the workers in the old ?

But the whole character of the present period of Capitalism, as opposed to the early period of the Industrial Revolution, is that to-day every technical advance increases and intensifies the problems of Capitalism. As the President of the Board of Trade has repeatedly declared, it is precisely the increase in the power of production which makes the problem more difficult :—

> The efficiency of production is so much greater now than ten years ago that the same volume of trade will not employ the same number of people.—(House of Commons, 10-4-23.)

On this side of the picture the writer makes no attempt at consideration. Once again the writer sees only the factors of economic advance, but does not see at the same time the contradictions of Capitalism, which turn these very factors into revolutionary forces.

AN advance in technique or organisation may temporarily benefit a special country which is in advance of others ; though even here the gain is only temporary, and not in the event a net gain for Capitalism as a whole. But even on this basis, the argument is unable to establish its case as a solution for the special problems of British Capitalism. For, as any investigation of the facts has repeatedly shown, in respect of any advance of technique and organisation, the advantage inevitably lies with America or Germany, which are not trammelled to the same extent by the same insuperable inherited deadweight of interests as Britain. This is actually shown in the extreme backwardness of British electrical development (British consumption for 1924-5, 118 units per head, as against French and German 200, Belgian 230, Swedish, Norwegian and American 500, Canadian 900). To take Baldwin's very timid, very late, Electricity Bill, or the still more timid, temporising proposals of the Coal Report as evidence of the forwardness of British Capitalism, is an extraordinary example of the confusion of the whole argument, in which servility to the idol of Capitalism has led to complete blindness to the real decline. It is just this impotence to get past the conflicting tangle of interests and impasse which points the way to the necessity of revolutionary means outside the power of Capitalism as the sole effective engine to clear a way for the new technical forces which

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are waiting to bring a new era to humanity. The new technical forces are for this reason the herald, not of the revival of Capitalism, but of the approach of the power of the proletariat.

THE situation is in fact in striking contrast to the situation accompanying the Industrial Revolution. Then Capitalism was carrying through a tremendous expansion in one country, Britain, in advance of the remainder. That one country was able to establish an effective world monopoly, and so had the scope for a virtually unlimited expansion. On the basis of that world monopoly British Capitalism was able to grant concessions of improved standards, mainly to the upper sections of the workers, above the standards of other countries, and in that sense to "buy off" the gathering attack of the working class. To-day, on the other hand, Capitalism has reached the stage of world development; and British Capitalism is no longer leading. The modern world is a world of a series of Capitalist Powers, which have divided the world between them, and are engaged in fierce competition. The intensification of competition results in the fact that, despite increased powers of production, the standards of the workers have for the past generation not only relatively, but absolutely, worsened. Capitalism, instead of being able to make concessions to "buy off" the workers, is actually having to make renewed and yet harder attacks upon their standards. In this situation each advance in technique and organisation only intensifies the competition. As each State advances into the era of large-scale State Capitalism and modern technical methods, the competition does not disappear, but on the contrary the world-conflict becomes more fierce. This is already shown in the present world situation, with the increasing antagonism of the Powers and gathering menace of renewed world war. The whole analogy with the Victorian era of peaceful industrial expansion and the disappearance of Chartism is thus completely false. The reality is increasingly intense conflict both within each State and between the States. This is the reality, as opposed to the illusory dreams of capitalist harmony.

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NOWHERE is this more clear than in the present world situation. The contrast between Victorian Cobdenism, Free Trade, Liberalism and Pacifism on the one hand, and modern Imperialism, Protection, Conservative domination and World War on the other, is complete. This was clear already before the war. The war and the Versailles Treaty stamped the character of the modern period of capitalist culmination and breakdown. To-day the Versailles Treaty is in liquidation. What follows it? Is it peace and international organisation, opening the way to an organic period of ascendant Capitalism? On the contrary. Versailles only gives place before newer and bigger antagonisms. This is the whole significance of the sequel of Locarno. The collapse of Geneva means that the first attempt at the formation of a United Front of Capitalist Europe has for the moment broken down. Even in the Old World of Europe the conflicts have proved still too strong. But this United Front of Capitalist Europe, of which Locarno was the first stage, was itself only a reflection of bigger antagonisms—against the Soviet Union, against the colonial peoples in Africa and the Near East, and eventually also against America. Locarno was a United Front based on a bargain; and when all the terms of the bargain came to be paid at Geneva, they could not be honoured. And the force that gave the decisive blow for the collapse was significantly enough the force of America.

IT is this increasingly open antagonism of America and Europe which is the most significant feature of the situation. The Houghton Report was not so much a gesture of "isolation" (America is the opposite of "isolated" from Europe, and only unwilling to take part as an equal in the conferences of European States, preferring to dictate from outside), but rather a direct throwing of discord into the gathering solidarity of the European States, and particularly of Britain and France. As a writer in the French *Information* acutely remarked, American policy in practice pursues "the perpetuation of anarchy in Europe" in just the same way as "France in the seventeenth century encouraged the anarchy of Germany." The rôle of America at Geneva was quickly seized on by such an organ of British Imperialism as *The*

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Times, and immediately related to the parallel raising of the dormant claims for damages against the British blockade. Brazil could not have held out without powerful backing : a small state is not in a position to resist on its own the forces of financial and economic intimidation that can be brought to bear on it, as is shown by the collapse of Unden over Mosul, as well as his retreat at Geneva. This backing has been found by some commentators to lie in Italy. But Mussolini is after all only the bailiff of American Capitalism ; and Brazil would not have risked venturing in an affair of no direct importance to itself in defiance of the United States as well as Britain.

ANOTHER aspect completely ignored by the facile prophet of capitalist rejuvenation is the line of development typified in the Chinese struggle. Colonial exploitation was admittedly the indispensable basis of nineteenth century capitalist expansion, as well as of the concessions to " buy off " the workers. Without it the technical advance would have already led to critical conflict. Nevertheless, the fact that just this basis is weakening and shaking is entirely ignored by this school. The Hong Kong boycott is estimated to have cost British Capitalism £75,000,000 in six months. British cotton exports to India have diminished by 57 per cent. since the war. Yet at the same time as this whole basis is disappearing, conventional speculations are made of the possibility of a repetition of the nineteenth century " buying off " of the workers, without any understanding of the dynamics of such a process.

EVEN though the colonial struggle should not carry for the time being beyond the bourgeois national limit, this is already sufficient to upset the capitalist equilibrium and create a situation hastening the decline of European Capitalism. But in fact the mass struggle in the present stage of world development inevitably carries further. The Imperialists are well aware of this ; as is shown in a striking message of the Hong Kong correspondent of *The Times*, which may be recommended to the attention of those Socialists and Liberals who affect to regard " Bolshevism " as something " alien " in China, and even in their

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sublime neutrality (and freedom from consideration of economics or facts) profess to regard it as a form of "imperialism." *The Times* correspondent is endeavouring to explain why in China "the people were grateful to Moscow" for the solidarity of the Russian Workers' Republic in their life and death struggle against Imperialist plunder, corruption and militarism; and he proceeds to explain that the Chinese popular movement is not so much a racial, national or colour movement as comparable rather to "the hate of the poor for the rich," *i.e.* a social struggle. And he goes on to say :—

> Revolutionary Communism is, it is said, entirely alien to the traditions and to the temperament of the educated Chinese. This may be true enough, but do the Chinese masses, for all their endurance and passivity, differ so much from other men as to be totally unaffected by revolutionary promptings sown in the fertile soil of grinding poverty, of general insecurity and increasing unemployment?

This Imperialist correspondent is less of a fool than many "Socialists": for he understands that at bottom, under all the many forms, the struggle of the masses for life is one in every country. And this is the secret of International Communism. The significance of the combination of the revolutionary struggle of the colonial masses with the struggle of the proletariat in Europe, which is one of the principal keys of Lenin's teaching, is already evident, not simply as a theory, but as a fact of experience. And once again the capitalists themselves are actually better aware of the factors making for their own decline than are the dreaming and servile Social Democrats who have abandoned Marxism or never understood it.

FINALLY, at home the actual situation confronting the working class is the exact opposite of that described, and is completely ignored in these airy speculations. The reality is not one of rising wages, growing prosperity, peaceful expansion, class conciliation, and "buying off" the workers, but instead is one of still actually falling wages, stagnant and even falling production, renewed attacks on the workers, and increasing class antagonism. In such a moment of impending desperate struggle to turn aside to idle and not even seriously grounded speculations

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of the possibility of prosperity in the future, class conciliation, higher wages and "buying off" the workers, is a typical occupation of a social democratic theorist ("who will deny that we may not be," "he would be unwise to prophesy," &c.) who has no leadership for the workers in the present. The whole I.L.P. speculation of a supposed social credit control while Capitalism continues to function, of raising the purchasing power of the masses, of ironing out unemployment, &c., is a castle in the air which takes no account of the actual lines of direction of British Capitalism to-day, and therefore is useless and impotent for the actual present workers' struggle, and only an excuse for refusing to face it. At the same moment that it is being made comes the news of the new British two and a half millions loan for engineering works in Czecho-Slovakia at half the British rates of wages. Capitalism inevitably moves along the line of the highest profit. To change this is not a question of theories of social reorganisation, but of the class struggle.

THE propaganda of American Capitalism as the model for the British workers (which is the actual current line of propaganda of the I.L.P. and of Right Wing Labour, as indeed of the whole Second International) is radically false. The prosperity of American Capitalism is based on its world Imperialist position, which is in certain limited respects comparable to that of British Capitalism half a century ago: an immense superiority in material resources and the basis of production, comparative freedom from the economic and political entanglements of Europe, a credit relation to other countries, and consequent power of world domination and exploitation. To attempt to transfer this, without modification or correction, to the entirely different conditions of present-day British Capitalism is a piece of doltish stupidity which is comprehensible in Conservative "popular" propaganda ("America or Russia"), but a pitiful self-exposure of "Labour" economic theorists.

But in fact even in America the future problems are already visible. The continued expansion of profits and production (for how many years will Fords continue to find scope for their present rate of accumulation?) and the consequent growing rôle of the

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export market leads to a situation which is only partially veiled, as with Britain before the war, by the growing export of capital, which in fact only intensifies the problem. In 1925, according to W. F. Dunne, American production increased by 17 per cent., while 12 per cent. fewer workers were in steady employment. The average wage in the textile industry is $17 a week (nominally £3 10s., without allowing for the much higher prices of the means of life), or less than the minimum subsistence level laid down by the United States Department of Labour. Trade Unionism is practically non-existent in the basic industries outside the railways. Renewed wage attacks are already developing. As one of the I.L.P. credit theorists, who claims the American situation as "a vindication of the arguments of our party," nevertheless writes on his return from America :—

> Great capitalist combinations have already succeeded in some industries in forcing down the standards of their workers far below the American average. Special measures have been taken by great combines, where no labour surplus existed, artificially to create conditions in which wages could be reduced. In these industries the workers have been caught unawares without industrial and political organisation ; strikes have been ruthlessly crushed, and the prospect is dark for Labour. (O. Mosley, *New Leader*, April 2, 1926.)

If this is the actual situation and struggle to be faced in America, where Capitalism is still ascendant, how much more so must it be in Britain, where Capitalism is declining and more and more placing its basis outside the home country ?

THIS is the final breakdown of the whole of this line of argument and leadership for the workers. It is no leadership for the actual struggle of the workers. This is most clearly shown in the conclusion reached in the article in question, in which the prophet of hypothetical capitalist recovery, after scolding the Communists for their blindness, because they base themselves on the facts of capitalist decline and intensified struggle, and draw practical lessons thereform, proceeds to give his own advice for the leadership of the working class in their struggles. It is as follows : "If," he declares, what he says is correct, "if" there is going to be "a decade or two" of capitalist prosperity—

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> If it comes to this, then in Parliament, on the political field, and under the auspices of the General Council on the industrial field, the movement must wring from the bosses every reform possible to prevent the workers losing the benefits of the new inventions which capitalism has taken over from science, and so hasten the coming of a new crisis.

This was issued in a Labour journal on April 10—three weeks before the date fixed for the heaviest capitalist offensive on the standards of the workers, when every nerve was needing to be expended to awaken the workers to the desperate struggle in front even to maintain their existing standards, to unite the working class front and overcome the reactionary obstacles to unity, to show the full scope of the capitalist attack and the new types of struggle developing, and the consequent new methods and practical lessons that must be learnt by the working class. At this moment comes this bland talk, completely ignoring the actual situation and its needs, of a hypothetical future prosperity and the solemn advice in that case to "wring every reform possible," "in Parliament" and "on the industrial field." It is this colossal unawareness, this complete indifference to the actual struggle and needs of the workers, that is the vital difference between I.L.P. theory and Communism or the revolutionary class struggle.

A SURVEY of the world and home situation this May Day points to the same single conclusion. At the present stage of world capitalism the antagonisms both abroad and at home are growing more, and not less, acute. Capitalism shows no sign of carrying within it the possibility of a further organic period of even approximately harmonious development. Certainly the revolutionary process is not a single continuous process, but is an unequal process with ups and downs, ebbs and flows, pushing forward now here, now there, and throwing up a thousand temporary and transitional forms and situations. But of the character of the war and post-war period as a whole, and the correctness of Lenin's diagnosis of it as the epoch of capitalist break up, there can be no question. Even those partial and temporary stabilisations that can be accomplished within it, can only be accomplished by means that are themselves revolutionary

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factors, intensifying the situation. Such has been the partial stabilisation of Europe on the basis of American indebtedness, or the temporary "solution" of the coal crisis on the basis of the subsidy. These devices only throw into greater clearness the fundamental antagonisms and inevitable conflict. In England the situation is that this inevitable conflict is reaching a critical and decisive stage, possibly even on May Day itself, or if it can yet be postponed, it cannot be postponed for long. The workers need to concentrate all their forces for this struggle, which makes demands that have not been known in England before. They will be well advised not to waste their time listening to the voices of those who for advice to-day can only offer them cloud-castles of an imaginary future. The danger to the working class movement is urgent. There is no magic way out of the impasse in England to-day. Only by united working class struggle, carried on with unhesitating determination, resourcefulness and sacrifice, can the workers even maintain their position in the present period of capitalist decline and hew a way forward to the next period, which must and can only be the period, not of capitalist revival, but of increasing capitalist break up, of intensified struggles, and eventually, where the workers have found their way, of working class power.

R. P. D.

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THE COAL REPORT AND AFTER

By ARTHUR HORNER

THE Coal Commission Report must be regarded, not as something complete in itself, but rather as one phase of a much bigger problem. Therefore before attempting to analyse its contents, or seeking to understand its implications, one is bound to examine the purpose and intention of those responsible for the existence of the Commission.

The mining industry has for some time been the subject upon which the leading economic experts of capitalist Britain have operated, and naturally so, for is it not, in the opening words of the Commission's Report, the basis of our whole economic life, which in its turn is the basis of our whole society? Just as the Sankey Commission can only be understood if the revolutionary fervour of 1918-1919 is properly appreciated, so is it only possible to understand the Samuel Commission by and through a thorough comprehension of the situation as it existed in July, 1925.

The owners had launched their attack upon the miners' standard of living. Huge cuts in wages were proposed, district settlements were to be re-introduced, and customs of years' standing were to be swept away. In addition, in each district separate attacks were made on customs and payments local to particular areas. The coalowners were well supported by British capitalism in general, for to it the reduction in miners' wages meant cheaper coal, and would be a preliminary to cuts in the wages of other workers, for had it not been so in 1921? Moreover, there was now only the memory of a smashed and utterly discredited Triple Alliance, which nothing had replaced.

The Government, acting as the general council for capitalism, stood looking on, whilst Mr. Baldwin talked complacently, between whiffs from his pipe, about the inevitability of a return to economic stability via wage cuts for all workers. Everybody waited to see the miners make their futile, though gallant fight,

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before succumbing to the superior forces of starvation and isolation.

The miners waited, prepared for the fray, seeking for allies, yet feeling the hopelessness of it all. No effective General Council for the whole British working class existed, for even the miners themselves, in that very year, had turned down the proposal for depositing power in this body to control the struggles of all or any section of the working class, though they had instructed the officials to seek to set up an Industrial Alliance as a successor to the dead Triple Alliance.

Moved as this proposal was by the little district of Forest of Dean, it lay forgotten and neglected, and would probably never have been called into the light of day, except that a new factor, in the shape of a militant secretary of the miners, had been elected, and he objected to resolutions of annual conferences being treated as merely pious expressions of opinion. Calls were sent out to the old members of the Triple Alliance, as well as to other organisations, and there was an atmosphere favourable to the setting up of such a body as was proposed, but on this occasion there was to be no dubiety concerning the responsibilities and obligations of the affiliated bodies. Rules of Unions must be changed so as to hand over authority to the Industrial Alliance, and Union autonomy and conservative restraint must go if the new organisation was to be made effective. All this demanded time for its realisation.

The Alliance proposal, however, was not taken very seriously at the time, firstly because very few believed it possible to get the National Union of Railwaymen in again, and, secondly, because nothing could be done which would build up this organisation in time for the mining crisis.

To the workers the position looked indeed hopeless. No power in the hands of the General Council, no Industrial Alliance, which meant that the miners must fight alone. But the unexpected happened, the great mass urge, more powerful than anything in its path, pressed forward, and in a conference called for the alleged purpose of discussing unemployment, and composed of all the executives of the Unions attached to the T.U.C., the miners and textile workers' representatives were permitted to

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put the case for their men, and in a few minutes 1921, with its stories of betrayals, became to the British working class what 1905 was to the workers of Russia, not the overthrow, but the justification for the unity of the workers in the class struggle, regardless of rules, constitutions, laws or precedents.

The Communist slogan of " All Power to the General Council " was accomplished in fact, and the Industrial Alliance also justified itself through its potential elements forming a bloc in the T.U.C., thus bringing support for the miners. The General Council now commenced to use its power, and arrangements were made for effectively meeting the attack by a hold up of all coal, a policy which was bound in its operation to bring about a general strike of the whole organised British working class. This, in effect, meant war against the whole capitalist class, including war against its General Council, which is the British Government.

To capitalism the impossible had occurred, and they quickly sought to modify their tactics to meet the new situation. " Over the top in the daylight " was quite a good move when the miners lay defenceless and alone at their mercy, but more shrewd and cunning moves were necessary to meet this new Solidarity of the Workers.

Time became the great essential for Capitalism. Time to strengthen its own forces, time to weaken its enemies, the workers. But the latter, in their new found power, would not talk of the smallest concession, and the coalowners faced with their own administrative and economic bankruptcy could not pay the price of the truce, so Capitalism in general stepped in, with its contribution towards its bankrupt son, Mining Capitalism, unnerved and totally unprepared as it was to face the new situation, yet hopeful of ultimate success. So the subsidy to retain the *status quo* was granted, to terminate on April 30, 1926. Meantime a Commission to be set up to inquire how the mining industry could continue to function under a capitalist system and yet make it unnecessary for general capitalism to pay the price of the maladministration inherent in the system. So the terms of reference become in effect " how to force the miners into the acceptance of wage or working conditions in accord with the economic capacity of the industry,

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regardless of mining capitalism's failure to provide a decent standard of life for those who work in the industry." If looked at from this angle, the problem simplifies itself and the apparent contradictions of the Report become clear and reconcilable.

The personnel of the Commission is ominous, for it is representative of all that is most dangerous, because most confusing, in capitalism's armoury. No coalowner sat upon it, and to the average man this conveys an impression of impartiality as between the owners and the miners. But this is no longer a coal industry problem, it is a class problem of the first category, and the important thing is to recognise that no worker is allowed to sit upon the commission, but that an astute capitalist politician presides over a Board which is representative of banks, railways, electricity, steel and textiles assisted by an astute capitalist economist. The following illuminating note on the personnel of the Commission will make this clear :—

THE COAL COMMISSION

WHO THEY ARE

Chairman : Rt. Hon. Sir HERBERT SAMUEL, P.C., G.B.E. Educated Balliol College, Oxford. Postmaster-General, 1910-1914 ; late HighCommissioner of Palestine. Brother of Sir Stuart Montagu Samuel, Bart., of the banking firm of S. Montagu & Co., whose chief partner is Lord Swaythling.

Members : General Hon. Sir H. LAWRENCE. Retired from Army 1922. Managing partner of Glyn, Mills & Co., bankers. Director of Vickers, Ltd., L.M.S. Railway, Electrical Holdings, Ltd., and seven other companies, including three foreign banks.

Sir WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, K.C.B. Educated Balliol College, Oxford. Formerly leader-writer for the *Morning Post.* Later in Board of Trade. Invented Labour Exchanges. Now Director of London School of Economics.

KENNETH LEE, Esq. Textile capitalist. Chairman of Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee & Co., Ltd., and of the District Bank.

It was pointed out that this was to be no Sankey Circus, permitting a display by miners' representatives, but that the Commission and its personnel, was to be determined by the Government in order to perform the task of enabling the mining industry to be placed on an economic and self-sustaining basis.

Now it should be obvious to all that, if the Commission was intended to examine the capitalist administration of the mining

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industry, it should have had at least one member who knew something about the intricacies of the most complicated industry in existence. But to discover what was wrong with the industry was not its purpose; on the contrary, its task was to justify its friends in the mining industry, whilst freeing general capitalism of the cost of its maladministration and throwing the burden on to the miners.

The task of the Commission was first of all to weaken the miners by seeking to alienate the support of the other workers from them. Right through the process of taking evidence, the representatives of other industries have been encouraged to declare that the high production costs of coal, due by implication to the miners' wage rates, are mainly responsible for the depression in trade which bears so hardly upon their employees, while, on the other hand, the mineowners sought time and again to place the responsibility upon dockers, trimmers, and railwaymen for their failure to give the miners a decent standard of existence. Fortunately the miners' representatives refused to be a party to these attacks upon their comrades, and defended them by declaring that the miners will never endeavour to solve their problems by stealing other workers' bread.

The Commission hearings have been merely the sounding boards for anti-working-class propaganda. Phrases of sympathy have been mouthed in order to allow for the destruction of the miners, through their isolation from the other workers, as the preliminary to the attack upon the wage slaves in other industries.

The Report itself is informative and is one of the most coolly calculated documents of its kind. Its voluminous character is misleading, because it conveys the impression of anxious and impartial searchings by honest, well intentioned men, whereas in fact its concrete and immediately applicable findings are very few and are contained in a few of the 294 pages, all of which give the coalowners what they have sought to secure, though it is done in a much more astute and able fashion than they have ever practised.

The Report opens with a general statement, emphasising the paramount importance of coal in the economic and social life of this country. It points out that the deficiency in selling capacity is to be found rather in the export than the import trade, and that

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almost all European coal producing countries are suffering from the same cause—" glutted markets." We are further consoled by the statement that, assuming the present rate of production, there is enough coal to last four or five centuries, and probably for seven centuries, if fresh means can be found to work at present unworkable seams, and more economical methods of coal burning are discovered. Therefore, research should be encouraged and Government assistance provided for the purpose of experimenting in methods for making coal go further, though we have already been informed that the trouble is chiefly because of over production.

The organisation of the industry as at present constituted is discussed and re-organisation is proposed. It is pointed out that some collieries are producing at a loss of 5s. per ton, whilst others are making a profit of 5s. per ton. It is argued that the present difficulties in lowering production costs are largely the result of small-scale production, and that the large collieries are usually those which make a profit, and in consequence it is concluded, not that nationalisation should be introduced in order to increase the size of the unit to its maximum, as one is entitled to expect, but that a process of amalgamation of a voluntary character, through trustification, should be resorted to, and thus increase the magnitude of the units by the elimination of the small fry. On the question of wages they point out that no worker is entitled to expect pre-war wages, for to do so is to presume freedom from responsibility for the costs of waging the war. Therefore, they refuse the miners' claim for wages commensurate with the increase in the cost of living, because it would result in the miners obtaining exemption from the burdens left by the war and throwing it unfairly on to the shoulders of other sections of the community. This point of view is refreshing after the cant usually put forward in this connection, and should serve effectively to embitter the fruits of victory. The Commissioners say, however, that whilst the present method of wage determination is good in principle—" Profit Sharing and Loss Sharing without control "—it could be improved if there were a revision district by district, so as to enable wages to be paid in accordance with the economic capacity of each district.

The 1924 rate of wages is condemned as being too high in its minimum rates, and the conclusion is drawn, therefore, that

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minimum wages must be reduced. The exact words are :—

> The gap between proceeds and costs in mining can, in the near future, be filled only in two ways : by a sudden contraction in the industry and a rise in prices, or by an immediate lowering of the costs of production. The second way of filling the gap cannot be avoided. We come reluctantly, but unhesitatingly, to the conclusion that the costs of production, with the present hours and wages, are greater than the industry can bear. We see no escape from giving up the minimum of 1924 (*i.e.*, 33⅓ per cent. on basis rates) as at present. That does not simply mean a return to the minimum of 1921 (*i.e.*, 20 per cent. on basis rates) ; in some districts less (than 13⅓ per cent.) may be needed, in others more.

That means district settlements, and possible drops below the utterly inadequate wages forced upon the miners by starvation and misery in 1921 after Black Friday. An apparent concession is made when they say that the National Wages Board shall have power to fix a national minimum, which will be low enough to permit the worst district to pay it, but that the man getting 45s. per week as subsistence wages should not be reduced further, though if a particular district wants to give more to married men, and to take it from the single or childless men, they should be permitted to do so, and this process they describe as the Family Wage.

The most important part, however, is that which deals with " The present situation."

Here the whole of the Commission's work come to fruition. Here they comply with their terms of reference. For after recognising that the subsidy, in its present form, has produced conditions which were purely artificial in the beginning, but which have now become normal abroad, in so far as British coal has been dumped on to the world's markets at several shillings per ton below cost of production there has resulted a considerable worsening of labour conditions in competing countries, forced upon the workers in the endeavours of foreign coalowners to discover an equation to cancel the effect of the subsidy, and these conditions will not automatically re-adjust themselves with the cessation of the subsidy. The subsidy in amount varies from 1s. 7d. per ton in the eastern area to 4s. 7d. per ton in South Wales. In spite of this state of affairs they say the subsidy must stop and "the gap made up in one of three ways—

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(1) Marked rise in price of coal.
(2) Better organisation.
(3) Lower standard of living."

They provide their own answers : " The first is improbable, and at best uncertain." " The second to be hoped for." " The last is a price that may have to be paid in wages or hours or unemployment."

And then they have the nerve to say, " The suggestions of the Miners' Federation and the *Mining Association* are both rejected."

The owners' terms were, in fact, what the Commission Report actually recommends :—

(1) Immediate cuts in wages nationally.

(2) The removal of all real power from the National Board.

(3) The introduction of variable district rates.

(4) The abolition of customs peculiar to certain districts under penalties of an extended working day, *i.e.*, The introduction of multiple shift. The abolition of the six for five turns to night and afternoon workmen in South Wales, and permit demands for economic prices for house coal to miners, *i.e.*, approximately £1 instead of 5s. per ton in many cases, or payment of house rent in Durham, Northumberland, and Scotland.

(5) Optional re-arrangement of hours, which involves the conditional abrogation of the Seven Hours Act, and is a preliminary to its total elimination.

(6) Advocation of piece rates for those who are at present on day wages.

The whole report aims at the splitting of the miners from the workers generally by the introduction of pseudo-Socialist baits, such as nationalisation of royalties with compensation (which merely transforms royalty owners into bond holders), together with municipal coal supplies, new houses and electrification proposals.

The Commissioners next seek to set districts of miners at war with each other, and piece workers against day wage workers within a district, whilst Saturdays off is the bait thrown out to those anxious to participate in sports, in order to secure their support for tampering with the seven-hour day. The holidays with pay, " when prosperity returns," is a part of a proposal which must lead to penalisation for absenteeism ; whilst pit head baths and houses are merely sops thrown in.

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The Commission Report is a part of the attack upon the miners as the preliminary to a general attack. Just as the setting up of the O.M.S., and the encouragement of Fascism, is part of the process of strengthening capitalism, just as the imprisonment of the Communists is part of the resistance of capitalism against attempts to weaken forces they intend to use against the workers, so is the propaganda of the Coal Owners' Association and the Coal Commission Report part of the process aimed at weakening the workers' forces by dividing and splitting.

It is the practice of the elementary and fundamental rules of strategy. What is our answer ?

This answer must be an unqualified refusal to retreat before the capitalist attack.

The coalowners' main line of approach is through district negotiations, as the preliminary to district settlements. Here the Miners' Federation is most vulnerable, owing to the varying economic situations which exist in the several districts. It is inconceivable that a reduction can be proposed nationally which will meet the situation in South Wales, &c., and which can at the same time be justified in Yorkshire or Notts. Therefore, however great the temptation in certain districts, no countenance must be given to leaders who toy with the idea of a break-away on the gounds of a particular district's temporary immunity from wage reductions.

The national minimum percentage must be maintained at all costs, for upon the retention of this principle can be built up Unity of Action upon the basis of common interest.

The Coalowners' invitation to discuss either the prolongation or the variation of the working day is dangerous in the extreme, particularly in the form it is being put forward, which is as an alternative to wage reductions. On the Commission's own statement 130,000 miners at present employed will be rendered redundant by a return to eight hours, and these men will become a menace to the local basis rates in consequence of their miserable state of destitution, due to their sacrifice upon the altar of capitalist necessity. There are 300,000 miners at present on the streets, refused the right to earn their daily bread. Wages are far too low, and there is every justification for the miners' claims to a six-hour

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day in order to absorb the unemployed miners, whilst a guaranteed weekly wage, commensurate with the increase in the cost of living since 1914, is the right enjoyed by many workers in other industries. These demands cannot be satisfied whilst capitalism retains its bankrupt methods in the industry, and is allowed to keep out of the ascertainments the most prolific source of revenue, namely, the coke and by-product plants.

Therefore, the miners should be supported in the demand for "Nationalisation of the Mines (including coke and by-products) without compensation and with workers' control, through pit committees." Every trick calculated to split the miners into sections and to turn the T.U. Congress into an ally of the enemy is being utilised. Leaders are being brought into the fight in support of an extended working day, whilst every reactionary element in the General Council is being flattered into the perpetration of acts calculated to defeat the miners, on the ground that as advocates of peace they are serving the community. There must be no toying with this problem, the time for diplomatic manœuvres is past. This is the time for gathering the whole of the organised workers into a disciplined force under the direction of the General Council, for the purpose of creating more power than the enemy can place against us. The Industrial Alliance must now justify itself by action. All power to the General Council must become a fact, it must remain a mere slogan no longer, and for the realisation of this a special congress of the E.C.s of the affiliated unions should be immediately called to complete the plans for action.

Negotiations must be seriously undertaken with the C.W.S. for the provisioning of the workers in the struggle, and all the necessary arrangements made to defend the workers against O.M.S. and Fascism. The International movement has now its opportunity to prove itself an organ of struggle. Let the General Council call upon the Amsterdam International and the R.I.L.U. to act with the British workers in this fight.

In the localities the Trades Councils should take their stand as the local sections of the General Council, by organising a real unity amongst the workers in the districts, using every means to bring to the average worker a full realisation of the issues involved

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in this struggle, not only for the miners, but for the whole working-class movement. Everything depends upon the mass might of the working class. If that fails now, the engineers' and railwaymen's attempts to improve their position is doomed, whilst the aspirations of all other workers for a fuller and better standard of life will be for years delayed. For only workers in united struggle can hope to defeat the powerful forces of a united capitalism.

The Government have declared their willingness to accept the report of the Coal Commission, plus the granting of an extension of the subsidy for a further three months, subject to both sides accepting the report. This attitude of a Government such as this one is demonstrates the oneness of the Commission and itself. If further proof of the class character of this voluminous document were needed, it is to be found in the apologetic agreement of this policy by the Coalowners' Association, who see in the report *carte blanche* for their programme of action.

The sentimental suggestions are discussed as being impracticable until prosperity returns to the industry.

They say if the miners want to know what the exact wage effects are going to be in each district, each district board must commence negotiations with the coalowners in the district, and thus are the miners expected to give away the first plank in their platform.

This proposal means death to the M.F.G.B. as an organisation, and leaves each district to pursue its own separate policy unsupported by the Federation as a whole. The M.G.F.B. conferences have given the answer, and are preparing in conjunction with the G.C. of T.U.C. to resist the attack. Whilst it is regrettable that the miners have no policy for improving the miserable conditions obtaining in the coalfields now, it is exceedingly good to read the definite declaration that district settlements will be opposed, whilst wage reductions on any pretext cannot be tolerated, and that the very thin manœuvre to breakdown the seven-hour day is one which cannot be sanctioned. Therefore, it is now the business of the workers everywhere to prepare for the struggle, realising that we are face to face with a decaying system of production, and that no ordinary trickery or cajolery can on this occasion negotiate the mining industry out of its dilemma. The declaration to maintain the *status quo* must inevitably lead in the present condition of the

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industry to a fight for nationalisation of the mining industry without compensation and with workers' control.

If this fight is to be won it must be a mass class struggle in Britain as the only means whereby we may evade the first steps in a new process of wage attacks in every industry.

Our answer must be unqualified refusal to surrender to the attack. There must be no retreat in the face of this capitalist manœuvre. There must be no yielding on the national wage principle. There must be no reversion to district settlements. Above all there must be no sacrifice in wages, hours or conditions. On the contrary, we must endeavour to secure wages commensurate with the increase in the cost of living since 1914. Our solution of "nationalisation of the mines with workers' control and without compensation" remains as the sole means whereby the economic prosperity of the industry can be obtained and the miners assured of a decent standard of existence.

It remains to consolidate all our forces to resist the coming attack. The industrial alliance must be built up as a real and effective organ of working-class defence. In the meantime our slogan must be "all power to the General Council," and the organisation for a common struggle of all the workers involved in impending industrial disputes. We must unitedly demand the release of the class-war prisoners.

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SHOOTING NIAGARA

By R. PAGE ARNOT

I HAD not intended to say anything about the way things are going until I had had a chance of reading about all that has happened and getting a complete grasp of the changes that I supposed would have taken place while I have been out of it. But the one startling thing that emerges from everything I have been able to read in the last few days (I write on April 15), from all the conversations I have had and questions asked from everyone I have been able to meet, is that the situation *in its essentials* is unchanged. The tendencies, the stream of forces that showed in what direction the current of events was running in July-August of last year have not been deflected, altered, changed in any essential, far less turned backward or stopped. As it was nine months ago so it is now, so far as the *direction* of events is concerned.

Nine months ago the workers and the capitalists of this country were on the very verge of conflict. The crisis was postponed; but the facts of that conflict were too plain to be hidden, too plain for even the most arrant self-deceivers to hide them from themselves. Everyone saw the facts, naked, clear, unfogged by illusions or smooth phrases. Everyone *knew* that the nine months' postponement was the period given to each side to make its preparations.

What is the position now? As it was then, nine months ago, so it is now, within a fortnight of the first of May. The only difference is that the brink of Niagara is fearfully near.

But when we turn to the actual preparations made, they appear to have been confined chiefly to one side. In one aspect after another, on sector after sector of the class-war front, the employers, the government and all the spiritual and material auxiliaries, from the Press and the pulpit to the strike-breaking organisations, both official and unofficial, feverish and unresting activity has brought almost complete preparedness.

I, for one, should not be surprised to learn that just as each European government, prior to 1914, had compiled under the

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name of "The War Book" the steps that it would take on the commencement of hostilities, so now the Government have a similar Class-War Book prepared ready to be operated against the workers of this country the very moment a miners' lock-out is declared.

On our side, on the other hand, the absence of preparations is the most noticeable thing. With unfailing, unfaltering belief in goodwill, good words, kindly atmosphere, give and take, fellowship, reconcilation, common ideals of citizenship, the forces on our side have been left unmarshalled, unprepared, unarrayed, immobilised, lest open preparations for a possible lock-out or strike should ruin the chance of agreement by seeming to show an intention to go to war. If this philosophy were right then how obvious is the intention of the government and the capitalists to go to war with the working class.

There ought to have been a fable of Aesop (and there may have been, but I cannot remember it) in which the sheep consult together and discuss whether or not the somewhat suspicious-looking animal, called the wolf, is really any other than a friend and brother. There would first of all be a discussion as to whether or not he had teeth, a considerable portion of the flock holding stoutly to the view that the animal's teeth and fangs were there only for the purpose of being employed against other wolves, and that granting the hypothetical possibility of the wolf's teeth being used in the abstract against sheep, it was clearly understood, and indeed the animal in question had offered to take a pledge, that he would, under no circumstances, put them to such a use.

We can imagine how Aesop would go on. "It is true," said the wolf, "that I was told by my father, who was told by his father, that if ever the sheep were to mutiny I might have to use my teeth." "But that," he added, "is a thing no sane sheep would think of doing, and so we can rule out the mere thought of my having to use my teeth in a such a way." Then the sheep said that they were much obliged to the wolf for putting the facts before them so clearly and courteously. And they agreed not to band themselves together in case it should be thought of as a mutiny.

After that the wolf used to eat them up one by one.

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Well, is the situation as hopeless as it would appear at first sight? On the one hand, it is true that the main tendencies of the last year have run so smooth and so strong that, in fact, no contrary tendency of any validity or duration, nothing, that is, but eddies of illusions and phrases, have arisen to stem the rush of events towards a clash of forces, and it is equally true that, while the forces on the workers' side have been confined to gestures of goodwill, the other side have used gestures of goodwill as weapons in an arsenal that included full military, police and strike-breaking preparations.

On the other hand, there is a latent force in the working class which can nullify the whole of the careful preparations of the capitalists. That is the force of solidarity, of working-class unity, the force of a clear and immediate answer to a call for support even if that call comes at the eleventh hour. Not once, but several times, the British working class have shown that this can be done. It happened last July. The Government had not reckoned on it. They felt that 1921 was the type of all subsequent "crises" in the Labour movement. They were taken aback, and they knuckled down.

So, again, this time, month after month of precious opportunity is let slip, while every hour is utilised by the other side.[1]

But the latent power of the working class to use the lesson of association and unity that they have learned in their daily lives in the factory, pit and workshop, to put it into practice in the form of a united defensive stand against the forces of capitalism, can

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[1]We must not minimise the efficiency of our enemies. During the last months they have scrapped the whole propaganda of the coalowners against the miners, as Lord "Jacky" Fisher used to scrap the obsolete ironclads, and have substituted for it the new, more deeply penetrating propaganda of the Coal Report. The coalowners' propaganda was a clumsy lie; the Coal Report is a clever lie. And being a clever lie it has already had a certain effect on the Labour movement. Some of those who ought to have known better have been captivated by its courteous words into accepting a cut in other people's wages.

The Coal Report is the latest version of the confidence trick. Beveridge, Samuel and the others are not merely not hand in glove with the mineowners but publicly took the occasion to be very rude to them, while the miner whose pocket had to be picked was treated in the most friendly and courteous fashion. We have all of us seen it done before in a railway carriage; but when it happens on a larger scale, the trick is not immediately recognised.

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spoil all the careful preparations of months, the careful staging by the newspapers and the other agencies of our enemies, and out of a situation that appears desperate can easily snatch victory.

But for this every worker, every Trade Union branch, every workshop must make their will clear and unmistakable to their elected servants, the servants they have chosen, the Trade Union officials. So that these, feeling the pressure and strong determination of the masses, may be heartened and themselves strengthened in the responsibility they have to defend at all costs the workers' standard of life.

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THE GENEVA FIASCO

By W. N. EWER

IT was not surprising that as the days passed in Geneva, nerves grew frayed and tempers jagged. For the statesmen of the great Powers were suffering from acute shock. When it was reported to Mr. Limbkins and his colleagues that Oliver Twist had demanded more porridge "horror was depicted on every countenance." The effect was pretty much the same when Sir Austen and M. Briand came to realise that they were being coolly defied by representatives of Sweden and Brazil.

Their dignity, their sense of decorum, were outraged. The impossible, the unthinkable, had happened. One of those things that is "simply not done" was visibly *being* done, could not be prevented by even the unanimous will of the Great Powers. They were baffled, bewildered, and intensely irritated.

It was worst, of course, for poor Sir Austen. M. Briand is a cynical player, able to extract amusement from the game, even when luck is running against him, able to play a bad hand coolly, and to score points even when the game itself is lost. Nor has his most bitter enemy ever accused him of being dignified. The Italians were laughing up the sleeves of their black shirts. Herr Luther and Herr Stresemann were out of the worst of it. Count Skrzynski walked on the hills in the daytime and read poetry in his rooms by night.

But poor Sir Austen suffered terribly. He is so dignified, so conscious of his dignity. Never was man so painstakingly and conscientiously aristocratic as this son of the Republican Mayor of Birmingham. He came to Geneva full of confidence in himself, full of pride in his office and in his Garter, complacently sure of a success that should crown the triumph of Locarno. When success turned to ludicrous failure, it must have been a bitter moment for him—not so much because he had failed as because of the manner of the failure. To have been checkmated by an equal, by a great statesman representing a great power, would have been endurable. To be stalemated by two miserable second-class states, about which nobody had ever troubled to

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think, was intolerable: an affront to his dignity which at times reduced him to a furious paralysis.

For a hundred years and more, diplomacy has been conducted on the assumption that all important decisions are taken by the Great Powers and more or less willingly accepted by the small ones. The distinction, for all that it was then the mode to talk of equality between states, was definitely laid down both in the Treaty of Versailles and in the Covenant of the League. The Treaty placed Europe under the hegemony of the "Principal Allied and Associated Powers." The Covenant conferred a sort of peerage upon them by creating them Permanent Members of the Council of the League. It was the clear intention of the Covenant makers that these permanent members should control the League and dictate its decisions. And though, for form's sake, the non-permanent members had to be given, in theory, the same powers as the permanent members, it was never anticipated that they would presume to use them. It was expected that, in accordance with custom and decent usage, they would do as they were told.

So completely was this taken for granted that when Britain, France, Italy, and Japan had decided that Germany must be brought into the League and given a permanent seat on the Council, nobody troubled to ask seriously whether the small powers agreed with this decision. For form's sake a note was sent by the German Government to the non-permanent Council members to ask if they would support Germany's claim to a permanent seat. But this was so much a formality that nobody seems to have taken the trouble to look twice at the replies. And again, when the French Government decided that Germany's entry into the Council must be counter-balanced by Poland's promotion to a permanent seat, this was looked on as a question which might indeed provide difficulties, but which could and would naturally be settled by a negotiation between the Great European Powers. Again, nobody bothered to ask whether the minor powers had any views. The suggestion that it should all be arranged not by the League Council, but by a preliminary informal, secret meeting of the representatives of the "Locarno Powers," seemed perfectly natural to everybody. Germany raged

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against the suggestion that she should enter the Council "arm-in-arm" with Poland. Sir Austen characteristically preferred that decadent Spain, instead of upstart Poland, should be given the peerage (Poland taking her vacant elective seat). British "public opinion" wanted the permanent seats kept really select and not vulgarised by the intrusion of any Power not indubitably and habitually recognised as of the first rank. But none of them dreamed of suggesting that the matter was one on which the smaller states ought to be consulted. They, it was assumed, would dutifully ratify any decision which was taken at the secret meeting.

So the statesmen came to Geneva: the Germans, determined to fight for entry in solitary state; M. Briand, determined to get a seat for Poland; Sir Austen, confident that, given a "free hand," his newly-discovered genius for negotiation would secure acceptance of the Spanish compromise; all of them quite sure that the whole business could be fixed up by a couple of days' bargaining between themselves.

The psychological reactions of the first day were significant. The Germans, finding themselves, for the first time since the armistice, in a strong diplomatic position, took full advantage of it. To all M. Briand's demands, to all Sir Austen's persuasions, they opposed a determined refusal. They had come to Geneva so that the arrangement made at Locarno should be carried out. That meant that they must enter the Council as it existed at the time of Locarno. Any pushing in of Spain or Poland simultaneously would be a breach of the Locarno understanding, to which they could not consent. The Allies argued that to insist on entering alone was to impose conditions not laid down at Locarno. They wrangled all day. But the Germans held firm. And by the evening Sir Austen, vaguely conscious that he was not going to be able to play his self-allotted rôle of triumphant conciliation, was already in a thoroughly bad temper. But the really significant thing is this—that although the Big Power statesmen had already had warning that Sweden and Brazil had very determined views of their own, they did not take them in the least seriously. They still took it for granted that, if they could do a deal with Germany, the Swedes and the Brazilians would toe the line. M. Briand went back to Paris. Sir Austen lapsed into a sulky

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inertia for two days. But when, on Tuesday evening, he got busy again, he was still obsessed by the idea that the essential thing was to get a Big Power agreement, still quite unable to realise that he had to reckon with M. Unden and Senhor Mello Franco.

It was only on the Thursday, at the informal sitting of the Council members, that the truth began to dawn on Sir Austen and M. Briand. Having failed to persuade Germany to accept their demands, they determined to coerce her, or to throw upon her the full responsibility for a breakdown. But for this they must present her with a proposal unanimously approved by all the Council members. And M. Unden calmly announced that when Sweden had said that she would consent to no additions to the Council (other than Germany), she meant what she said, and that she had not the slightest intention of altering her decision at the dictation of Britain and France.

The cool effrontery of the Swedes in daring to have a view and a will of their own staggered and infuriated Sir Austen. He could not believe it. He would not believe it. The only explanation that his mind could formulate was that M. Unden was acting as the instrument and the mouthpiece of German policy. He told him so. He sneeringly recalled Sweden's stand and final capitulation over Mosul. He tried to browbeat him into giving way. But M. Unden simply sat tight. M. Briand tried persuasion. It was never contemplated, he urged, that the veto should be used in such circumstances—meaning, apparently, that it was only intended to be used by Great Powers. M. Unden sat tight. M. Briand tried menaces, reminded M. Unden that Louis XVI had been dubbed "Monsieur Veto," and that he had lost his head. M. Unden still sat tight.

At last, in very bad temper, they gave it up. But, again, their reaction is interesting. They assumed that Sweden must be the tool of Germany. They decided, therefore, that new pressure must be brought to bear on Herr Luther and Herr Stresemann. They completely ignored Brazil, though Senhor Mello Franco had already made it plain that he had categorical instructions to use his veto against Germany unless Brazil's claim to a permanent seat was simultaneously satisfied.

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This ignoration of Brazil was one of the most remarkable and most significant features of the whole affair. M. Briand and Sir Austen simply could not bring themselves to take Brazil seriously or to admit it into their calculations. One pictured Sir Austen, with his glassy stare fixed on Senhor Mello Franco, murmuring: "Harrow I know, and Winchester I know, but who are ye?" Brazil just wasn't one of the countries that one knows. So they disregarded her and thereby made themselves finally and completely ridiculous. For their next three days' diplomacy was spent in manœuvres and in the elaboration of schemes every one of which was condemned in advance to futility by the attitude of Brazil.

They began, in the fit of anger engendered by Sweden's resistance, by launching an ultimatum at the Germans, conceived in the spirit of Versailles rather than in the spirit of Locarno. The Germans rejected it; whereupon Sir Austen and M. Briand behaved each in accordance with his character. Sir Austen threw his hand up, declared that it was no good going on and that it was all Germany's fault: behaviour half that of a petulant and stupid child, half that of the politician whose first instinct in a disaster is to look for somebody else on whom to throw the blame. He relapsed again into sulky inaction. M. Briand, on the other hand, began casting about for ways and means of circumventing the difficulty and of getting Poland on to the Council in spite of the German opposition and the Swedish veto. Freed from the handicap of Sir Austen's clumsy co-operation, he did succeed in devising that intricate scheme of resignations and replacements which, pleasing nobody, was accepted by everybody, but which, since it ignored Brazil, was as useless as it was ingenious and of no more value than Sir Austen's sulks.

And then came the final assembly, with its revelation that not only Brazil and Sweden, but all the more independent of the small powers—Holland, Norway, Denmark, China, Switzerland, Albania—were in vigorous revolt against the domination of the League by the Big Four. Had there been some co-ordination, they might have achieved something. But there was not. They were all in revolt, but they were all at cross purposes, pulling in different directions, quite incapable of uniting to fight the hege-

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mony they resented. It was for all the world like a spluttering revolt of the back benches in the House of Commons, doomed to failure because the rebels have no organisation, no direction, no common objective. The control of the League by the Big Powers has been shaken; but it has not been broken; nor is it likely to be broken. But even Sir Austen must have realised at the end that a change of tactics will be necessary, and that, unless fresh disasters are to be courted, the small powers—and especially those which happen to be for the moment on the Council—will have to be treated less cavalierly than in the past.

How much more he has realised it is hard to say. At the end of it all he seemed rather pleased. For he saw, of course, that in Brazil he had the desired whipping-boy: that he could throw all the blame for failure on Senhor Mello Franco, and go home claiming to have preserved the unity of the European Powers. It was, in view of his attitude on the Saturday and Sunday, a singularly impudent claim. It sufficed, indeed, to satisfy the House of Commons and to avert the necessity for resignation. But the fact remains, though Sir Austen's realisation of it may be doubtful, that the really important outcome of the whole Geneva meeting is that it has upset every calculation on which the British "Locarno" policy was based.

Writing in the January LABOUR MONTHLY of the strategic plan which inspired that policy, I pointed out that, admirably as it was conceived, it might be very hard to carry out. "It is one thing to plan a strategy on paper and another thing to work it out in practice. Things are apt to go wrong. Diplomacy is a combination of Kriegspiel, chess and poker, at which the shrewdest calculation may be devastatingly upset."

But I certainly did not foresee that things would go wrong and calculations be upset quite so rapidly.

The whole plan of campaign in which Locarno was the first move was dependent upon the establishment of accord in Europe and of a firm union of the European Powers against the insurgent forces of the East and against the Communist menace of the Soviet Union. It was the prime task of British diplomacy to establish that union, and to establish it under British influence. Locarno was a big step in this direction. It gave Great Britain

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an unquestioned ascendancy in European politics. The influence of Downing Street was paramount alike in Paris, in Berlin and in Rome.

In three months Sir Austen contrived by a series of blunders, of which his extraordinary behaviour at Geneva was the culmination, to destroy that ascendancy. From being the arbiter of Europe he has become its laughing stock. The influence which Lord D'Abernon had acquired by years of careful and brilliant work in Berlin has been dissipated. For, however much Herr Stresemann may declare that Germany still regards herself as bound by the Locarno agreements, though they are not technically in force, neither he nor his colleagues will easily forget either the attempt to bully Sweden into consenting to the promotion of Poland and Spain, or the vindictive attack on Germany when the Friday ultimatum was rejected.

And while Germany has been estranged, France has been offended. It has got neither its treaty of guarantee nor its increase of support on the Council, nor, as yet at any rate, its concessions in the matter of debts. Wherefore, French policy, both in Europe and in Asia, is becoming again markedly independent, and is showing distinct signs of becoming even antagonistic to that of Great Britain.

As to Italy she had, even before Geneva, proved herse characteristically faithless. For the moment that she had obtaine her favourable debt settlement she cheerfully and cynically r pudiated all the "gentleman's understandings" of Rapallo a began to pursue a policy which by no means fits in with the pl of Downing Street.

The united front of Locarno is, in fact, shattered to pie Again in the smaller capitals of Europe, France is intrig against Germany, Britain against France, Italy against all thr them. The internal struggle for power is going on behin façades of Locarno and Geneva. There will, for the time l be no collaboration of Europe against the East. England, I and Italy are fighting an anxious kind of three-cornered duel niscent of the Anglo-Franco-Russian conflict in 1840. D Street, having committed the tactical stupidity of allow

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Austen himself to conduct negotiations far beyond his capacity, must needs devise a new strategic plan.

What will it be? Will the attempt be made to retrieve the failure of Geneva and to rebuild the shattered front? Will there be a reversion to the older plan of bringing the Border States under British influence and using them as a diplomatic and economic weapon against Russia? Or will there be a sudden decision to abandon the game as hopeless and to come to terms with the Soviet Union?

I think the second is the most likely. The first for the moment is too difficult. The third seems still unthinkable. And indeed there are already indications of an intensified activity in Helsingfors and in Warsaw and even of plans to hold out tempting offers to Turkey if she will desert her Russian entente, abandon her flirtation with France and enter the diplomatic service of Great Britain.

That is likely enough to be the new game. But it too requires consummately skilful playing. If Sir Austen insists not merely on remaining at the Foreign Office, but on himself playing the hand, the result may be edifying, but is not likely to be notably successful.

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TEACHERS AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

By A.M.A.

WHEN the Annual Conference of the Teachers' Labour League decided last December to affiliate to the Educational Workers' International, considerable excitement was aroused in the capitalist press. The T.L.L. received free, gratis and for nothing newspaper publicity which would have cost more than its total yearly income. At one jump the League leaped into fame and was accorded the honour of inclusion in the Red Lists of the *Morning Post* and the Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union.

Needless to say the facts about the affiliation were grossly mis-represented and its significance exaggerated. As usual the Right Wing delegates to the Conference provided the Press with plenty of ammunition. Their ignorance and the unscrupulous fury of their attacks on the E.W.I. were hardly surpassed even by the professional panic-mongers of the Press. More than one opponent of the affiliation talked excitedly of Red plots and Moscow gold, while several dubbed as "Communist" the somewhat diluted Marxism of the new aim incorporated in the Constitution: "To enable teachers to identify themselves with other workers in the struggle to replace the Capitalist State by the Socialist Commonwealth." This, of course, provided excellent copy and was utilised to the full. Actually the E.W.I. is not a Communist organisation nor is it affiliated to Moscow. It is a Trade Union International affiliated neither to Moscow nor to Amsterdam, though it includes national sections affiliated to both bodies and others which are outside both. It does, however, include the Russian Educational Workers' Union, which is by far the strongest national section, though that strength is not fully represented on the Executive. Contact with the Russians is quite enough to account for the fury of the Press and of the right wingers. But even so the significance of the move was absurdly exaggerated. The scare-mongers conveniently forgot to inform their horror-stricken

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readers that the League is not yet representative of the teachers of Great Britain. Apparently its total membership amounts to less than one per thousand of the organised teachers in this country.

Nevertheless the Press was faithfully performing its duty as the vigilant watch-dog in the capitalist garden. It is too late to bark when the invader is well inside the defences. Undoubtedly the outcry was a timely warning of the dawning class-consciousness in British teachers which foreshadows a real menace to the Capitalist system. As a matter of fact, the warning was hardly needed. The reactionaries had already begun by the formation in 1924 of a Conservative Teachers' Advisory Committee "to counteract the activities of the T.L.L."

* * * * *

Until recently in this country, except for a few isolated rebels, the teachers have been above the battle, onlookers at the spectacle of the class war, often sympathetic to the workers whose struggles they understood from their close contact with the workers' children—but still onlookers. Many of them have a pathetic belief in the "uplifting" power of education which leads them to indulge in W.E.A. classes and other semi-philanthropic institutions. Others are badly infected with the "culture virus"—an infection which produces an obstinate worship of "pure" scholarship and "knowledge for its own sake." There are many devoted and enthusiastic teachers who fondly think that the schools are outside politics and that education can be neutral.

Such illusions are, of course, the outcome of a privileged economic position, especially with secondary teachers. Even the elementary teachers have enjoyed a wage and a security of tenure, which has put them economically above all but the best paid sections of manual labour. Moreover long holidays and comparatively short hours give them the luxury of leisure. Further the control over school appointments being, at any rate outside the big towns, largely in the hands of squire and parson, every care was taken to ensure that teachers were "safe" people. Raised above the poverty line and swaddled in the teachings of religion it was not surprising that the average teacher lost his contact with the working class from which he came and whose children he taught. Thus,

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even when he realised the necessity for organisation his instinctive aim was rather to secure " professional status " than to utilise the weapons which manual workers were compelled to use. Even now the vast majority of secondary teachers and many elementary teachers hope rather to imitate the doctors and the lawyers than the miners or the railwaymen. Though teachers are comparatively well organised—it is the exception to find a teacher who does not belong to some organisation—none of their organisations are properly constituted Trade Unions. Finally the teaching profession has always been open to women, and the preponderance of women in the elementary schools has undoubtedly had a reactionary influence.

The more far-sighted capitalist politicians did not fail to realise the importance of keeping the teachers as a class contented with their lot, and, as it was not always easy to persuade local authorities to share this view, the central government has assumed a considerable share of the financial burden of teachers' salaries. Under the existing system—which is now to be ended apparently at the behest of a harassed Treasury—the Board of Education pays half of the salary bill. It was Mr. Lloyd George with the assistance of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher who secured the adoption of a national scale for teachers—no doubt as part of his insurance policy against revolution. The Burnham scale of 1920 was regarded by the majority of teachers, especially in the country areas, as a tremendous concession to the progressive spirit. Henceforth education and those connected with it were to take their rightful place in the community.

Satisfaction, however, was short-lived. Like the other " aristocrats of labour " the teachers were immediate sufferers from the acute crisis of a decaying capitalism, which with all its tender sympathy for the teachers can no longer afford to pay " high " wages.

The grandiose reconstruction schemes of the post-war boom period were hewed down by the Geddes Axe. Incidentally the teachers received their first lesson in the realities of the class struggle. The Burnham award had been accepted by the teachers and the local education authorities for a period of five years. It was a fixed scale, deliberately designed to provide a small but progressive

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increase of real wages as prices returned to normal. It also included a non-contributory pension scheme. But before the scale came into force, the boom collapsed, and from the very start the local authorities used every loophole in the agreement to whittle down the actual wages. Next, Parliament itself took a hand. The Pensions Act was thrown out and 5 per cent. from salaries was deducted as a contribution towards the revised superannuation scheme. Thus encouraged, the local authorities had another go. The teachers were faced with a demand for a five per cent. cut as "a voluntary contribution towards national economy"—or a 10 per cent. enforced reduction. Not being prepared to take strike action the teachers submitted. Meanwhile guerilla warfare had broken out between the teachers and some of the more reactionary local authorities. At Lowestoft the National Union of Teachers successfully organised a strike, which was victorious after a six months' struggle. Elsewhere they were not so successful, chiefly owing to a lack of the militant spirit, and in several districts the scale has never been in force. In 1923 the Tory Minister of Education foreshadowed a further onslaught on teachers' wages which was, however, postponed by the fall of the Tory Government and the advent of the first Labour Government. Administratively, the Education Office was one of the few successes of the Labour Government. C. P. Trevelyan did succeed to some extent in "reversing the engines." The economy ramp was temporarily stopped, with the result that a considerable number of new entrants into the profession were absorbed after a period of unemployment, which had threatened to become permanent. But the respite was brief. In spite of generous election promises the Red Letter Government has returned to the economy policy. Circular 1371 and Memorandum 44 mean a progressive decrease in educational expenditure, which is a serious threat both to the workers' children and to those who teach them. Already the recent arbitration award by which the existing Burnham scale is confirmed for 5 years, is threatened. The award was accepted by the local educational authorities only on condition that the government grants were not cut, and in view of the avowed intention on the part of the Board of Education to economise, these authorities have expressly reserved the right to repudiate the award.

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The lessons of the last five years have had their effect upon the teachers. The immediate effect was an impulse towards strike action. Even in the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters, which represents about 90 per cent. of the men secondary school teachers, there was a minority demand for registration as a Trade Union. Proposals were made that the N.U.T. should affiliate with the Trade Union Congress. As already mentioned the N.U.T. conducted a successful strike at Lowestoft.

But the impulse soon died away. On the whole the teachers retained their faith in the parliamentary weapon. Their influence at election time had always been considerable and they were eagerly courted by all parties. More than one M.P. owed his position largely to the efforts of teachers. Now they began to discover that these representatives were not to be trusted. At least one Coalition Minister climbed into power on the backs of the teachers—only to betray them at the behest of his capitalist masters. Such broken pledges caused a decided swing towards Labour, even in the secondary schools. At one school, out of a staff of thirty, at least fifteen secondary teachers voted Labour at the 1923 Election. As a result several prominent members of teachers' organisations obtained seats in Parliament as Labour M.P.'s. Dimly the teachers had begun to realise that the Labour Party was less likely to economise on working class education than the capitalist parties, and they were prepared to support that party with their votes and even by active propaganda.

It was at this time that the Teachers' Labour League came into existence. It was at first a purely political propagandist body. Its objects as defined in the Constitution were :—

> To advance the cause of education by the creation of public opinion as to the value and significance thereof.
>
> To focus this opinion by securing Labour representation on Local Governing Bodies and in Parliament.
>
> To promote the interests of the teaching profession generally and, with these objects in view, to work wholeheartedly in support of the Labour Movement locally and nationally, to co-operate with other sections of the Labour and Socialist Movements in working towards a new social order, based upon the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.

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In practice the League functioned as a part of the vote-catching machinery of the Labour Party and provided a useful platform for a number of ambitious men and women who were intent on making a position for themselves in the Labour Movement.

In the League, however, there were always a number of class-conscious Left Wingers who aimed at a more thoroughgoing policy. The question of international affiliation has provided the test question between the two sections. In theory, of course, there is no difference of opinion as to the desirability of international connections. In practice, however, it soon became clear that there were violent objections to affiliating to the only existing International organisation of Socialist Teachers—the E.W.I. For that organisation stands uncompromisingly on the basis of the class struggle. It reflects with complete frankness the attitude of the Socialist teacher to the bourgeois state. Teachers in most European countries have never enjoyed the privileged position accorded to British teachers. As a result the more advanced sections are much closer to the realities of the class struggle. Indeed, in the backward countries of Europe, teachers have often been in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement. In Bulgaria, for instance, many teachers have lost their lives and others their liberty during the Fascist terror. The E.W.I. faithfully reflects these tendencies.

The General Secretary, in an article on the Third International Conference of the E.W.I. says :—

> Our ideology is simple and primary. We want to organise on the class basis within a single United International, the five millions of teachers in the world, because they are wage-earners. We want to achieve through the victory of our class, the liberation of the school, which can only be performed by the suppression of wage-earning. . . . Appealing to every socialist tendency, we denounce the falsehood of the so-called "neutral" education, and assert that education is always practically a monopoly in the hands of the ruling class.

Not unnaturally, many members of the League unused to this frank and outspoken statement of the class position were inclined to shrink from too close a contact. Gradually, however, their sincere belief in the necessity for international action as well as sentiment won them over. At the Annual Conference of the Teachers' Labour League in London, on December 29 of last year, a resolution in favour of affiliation was carried.

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That does not mean, of course, that the struggle within the League is over. It was not to be expected that the Right Wing would accept their defeat as final. Within a week of the Conference, individual members of the Executive were repeating in the *Daily Herald* the misrepresentations with which they had opposed the affiliation. Opposition will doubtless continue on the part of those elements who consciously or unconsciously are opposed to a class policy, national or international.

They argue that an open avowal of the class position will frighten off a large number of teachers who are ready to come into the Labour Movement. They are, in fact, in complete sympathy with the Liberalising tendencies at present in control of the Labour Party machinery—with or without the assistance of Eccleston Square, the minority may even be prepared to split the League rather than abide by a decision of which they disapprove. But, so far, the members of the League have refused to be stampeded by the Communist bogey. The new constitution and the affiliation marks the beginning of an attempt to rally the teachers round a clear cut socialist and working-class policy.

The T.L.L. has definitely set its feet on the right path, and deserves the active support of all who accept the class position. It has difficult tasks before it. First it has to break down the wall of prejudice which divides the teacher from the manual worker. It has to overcome not only the "snobbishness" of the teachers but also the ingrained suspicions of many workers for anybody and everybody who wears a white collar. This can only be done by recognising that the interests of teachers are identical with those of the children they teach and of their parents. The Annual Conference took the first step in this direction by openly supporting the promotion of an Educational Workers' Trade Union in this country, affiliated to the T.U.C. and the Labour Party. Once the teachers are linked up industrially with the rest of the workers nationally and locally, fraternisation will be easy.

The second task facing the League is the unification of all existing organisations and permeation of them with the class-conscious ideas formulated in its Constitution. There are at

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present in existence no less than 57 different organisations competing for the allegiance of British teachers. Among them are organisations which are violently antagonistic to one another. Not one of them is registered as a Trade Union nor in contact with the working-class movement. Here, too, the League has made a start. A resolution was passed instructing the N.E.C. "to organise groups of League members inside all local and national bodies of teachers, these groups to meet regularly, to function as definite units of the League, and to pursue a common policy as outlined by the N.E.C. of the League."

Thirdly, the League should take up the cudgels on behalf of the lower paid grades. There are large numbers of uncertificated and supplementry teachers whose average wage is not more than £2 a week. There are the teachers in the profit-making commercial schools, who are mercilessly exploited. It is true that the League is not a Trade Union, and cannot therefore directly undertake industrial tasks, but that should not prevent it from exercising a powerful pressure from within upon the existing organisations.

These are necessary preliminary tasks if the League is to become a skeleton framework of a militant teachers' organisation, able to counteract fascist and counter-revolutionary attempts to use the teachers against the working class at a time of revolutionary crisis. The Annual Conference entered on these tasks and so definitely aligned itself with the Working Class Movement, nationally and internationally.

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ITALY TO-DAY

By L. W.

THE process of political development in Italy has advanced at a rapid pace during the past twelve months and the Fascist government has now achieved a position of some stability, a fact which makes the present a suitable moment for a summing-up and an estimate of the situation.

The ministerial changes of last July marked the final formal break between the Fascist and other parliamentary parties. Di Nava, minister of national economy, was the last non-Fascist to occupy a ministerial post, and his replacement by Belluzzo indicated the complete success of Mussolini in securing control of Parliament. De Stefani, the Minister of Finance, had, in his endeavours to stabilise the exchange value of the lira, lowered the import duties, and restricted bourse currency speculations and the issue of credit. Such a policy was opposed to the interests of the large banks, and Farinacci, at the call of the *Banca Commerciale*, led a movement to remove Stefani. Success was achieved in July and Count Volpi, president of this bank, took his place.

The National Congress of the Fascist Party in June had indeed cause for the exultation in which it indulged. The constitutional opposition—the " Aventine "—had abstained from hostile action ; the danger of attack from working-class quarters was reduced to a minimum by the violence which had now been developed to its highest point and had become fully incorporated in the machinery of State.

Fascism had become the State ; the revolution of 1922 was fully legalised ; the tyranny of the heavy industrialists could be exercised with the full sanction of law.

Three legislative measures of the first importance in the stabilisation of the Fascist political position had been passed in the parliamentary session just ended.

First in importance was the Act which gave the Government full power to legislate by decree instead of by parliamentary process. Even before the passing of this Act, the legislative

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machine was almost completely under Fascist control ; the huge Fascist majority was swollen by the deliberate abstention of the liberal and democratic opposition, and such criticism of the Government as could be expressed by the Communists, who constituted the sole effective opposition, was severely hampered by the constant physical assaults made, even in the Chamber itself, on any speaker expressing antagonism to the Fascist policy. With the passing of legislative powers to the Executive, another important restriction has been placed on the power to criticise the dictatorship.

The second Act of 1925 which confirmed the Fascist revolution was that granting powers to the Government to dismiss any civil servant whose political views were not acceptable to those in power. Thus the strength of the Executive was further increased and the control of the State more firmly secured by the Fascist party.

The third measure of 1925 was the Press Law, rushed through the Chamber in a single night, which increased the powers of the Government to interfere with the publication of journals of which they did not approve.

Such was the legislation of the earlier part of 1925, which was the expression of the Fascist consolidation of power. In October it was followed by further measures expressing more openly the class character of Mussolini's Government. These were designed in the first place to carry on the work of intensifying Fascist control of the political organisation ; Acts were passed defining and extending the powers of the Prefects, and destroying the rights of self-government of the municipalities, which had often, by their anti-Fascist majorities, been a thorn in the side of the government. The exclusion of working-class representatives from local councils was ensured by a provision that members of associations " tending to subvert the political organisation of the State " should be inadmissible for election. At the same time the personal control of Mussolini over the executive was increased and criticism of his acts made a criminal offence, while powers were taken to denationalise Italians living abroad who indulged in hostile comments on Fascism.

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Having thus destroyed the possibility of any constitutional participation of the opposition in the forms of parliamentary or local government, the Fascists turned their attention to the trade unions. The task of the Fascists was made easy by the inaction of the General Confederation of Labour in face of an agreement made in October between the industrial capitalists and the Fascist corporations, whereby the latter were recognised as the sole organisation of workers and employers in their respective industries. Following this, the premises of numerous trade unions and trades councils were forcibly occupied by the Fascist organisers, and the whole proceeding was legally recognised by an Act passed in December. By this Act there can exist only one organisation of workers and employers for each branch of industry and it must be recognised by royal decree. Such an organisation may be recognised when not less than one-tenth of the workers are organised therein. All officers are subject to royal approval and they may be removed by government officials at any time and all power delegated to a government nominee. Other organisations of the workers are not, in general, prohibited, but they have no legal standing, they cannot enter into negotiation on behalf of their members on matters of pay or other conditions of service, and they may have no international connections.

Simultaneously with this solidification of the formal basis of the Fascist State, a vigorous policy has been pursued to mould the psychological factors in public life to the Fascist pattern. While all written criticism is prevented by law and all spoken criticism by personal violence, the Fascists themselves put out a constant stream of propaganda designed to conceal the facts of their tyranny, the rottenness of Italy's economic position, and the dangerous international situation created by Mussolini's foreign policy.

The line of argument has varied little since the early days of Fascism, only the tone is even less conciliatory. Italy has been rescued, runs the story, by the high-souled patriots of the Fascist party from Bolshevist excesses and the risk of red ruin. Italy is recovering from the results of the war and is gradually taking up the position among nations to which it has so clearly pleased Mussolini and God to call her. Flag-wagging and imperialist

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sentiment are the only arguments of the Fascists : when these are exhausted they fall back on threats and actual violence.

Another device now freely used by the Fascist government is the frame-up. Many minor instances could be recorded, but the Zaniboni affair, in November 1925, will furnish the best example. This occurred when the " third phase " of Fascism was in view and Mussolini required all the personal popularity which could be obtained to secure the acceptance of these last links in the chain of repression. Italy's economic position was growing worse and the bloody scenes in Florence against non-Fascists had swung middle and working-class opinion once more against the Government. The story is a confused and incoherent one, but the essence is that Zaniboni, a former unitarian socialist, was charged with proposing to shoot Mussolini with a rifle from the window of a hotel near the Foreign Office in Rome and that the plot was discovered just before its consummation. The reports of the matter which circulated were full of contradictory details and the selection of Zaniboni for the rôle of murderer was a tactical error : discussion of the plot was soon prohibited and the dilatory machine of Italian justice will prevent any more being heard for many months. Meanwhile, the news of a plot to kill Mussolini secured a sentimental reaction in his favour of great political value at the time.

The handling of the trial of the Matteotti murderers shows further the skill of the Fascist government in dealing with hostile public opinion. The murder took place in June, 1924. In view of Matteotti's high political importance (as secretary of the Socialist Party, a brilliant parliamentarian, and a penetrating critic of the Fascist party) the murder was a public affair of the first order. When it was followed by the arrest of prominent Fascist leaders, the issue at once became the chief event since the March on Rome. Political confusion was extreme. The fall of Fascism was momentarily expected, and many members of the Party, hoping to placate the opponents whose rise to power seemed imminent, wrote hysterical " confessions " which became part of the evidence in the trial. There followed the customary slow inquiry by the magistrature which has been prolonged until the last few weeks.

The major political personages (whose association with Mussolini in the matter invested the proceedings with added

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significance) were found guilty only of inducing others to abduct Matteotti, and they were accordingly liberated under the terms of the amnesty of August, 1925. The trial of the other defendants was farcical in the extreme, and the result a foregone conclusion. Two were acquitted, while the remaining three were sentenced to periods of imprisonment which were reduced by the amnesty and the time already served while awaiting trial to a few weeks in each case. By ensuring delay and by clever stage management the Fascists have thus not only secured the practical acquittal of the murderers, but have prevented hostile public opinion from damaging their cause.

The application of the Press Law has resulted in the suppression of one of the last remnants of criticism of the Fascist hegemony. Innumerable papers have been suppressed wholly or periodically. All Socialist papers were entirely suppressed in November and December last and *Guistizia* has never re-appeared. *Unita* and *Avanti* are issued again but they are constantly sequestrated whenever they deal with any topic even slightly political in character. The Catholic non-party press alone remains relatively undisturbed and occasionally is permitted to print mildly hostile comments on the rulers of Italy. The Journalists' Association has been placed under the control of government commissioners. A number of valuable clandestine papers are circulated both by the bourgeois and by the working-class opposition but the technical difficulties are immense and the risk of capture and suppression is very high.

The replacement of Farinacci as secretary of the Fascist Party to the end of March marks the achievement of a stage in Italian events, and the consummation of a definite task by the leaders of the Party.

The replacement coincided with the successful termination of the Matteotti trial. At this point, Mussolini at long last felt a measure of security in a degree he had never experienced since the murder. In the political crisis which followed this event, the Fascist militia was mobilised and it was found that 80 *per cent. of the rank and file was in a state of desertion.*

This was a fact of profound significance. It meant that Mussolini could not rely on the armed support of the middle

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classes, the peasantry and the miscellaneous declassed elements constituting the Black Shirt Army. Urgent measures were necessary. These classes must be rallied to the Fascist flag. Farinacci was selected for the job.

Farinacci was a member of the extremist wing of the Fascist Party. He pursued a notorious career of brutality as "Ras" (or dictator) of Cremona and established a reputation for unscrupulousness that fitted him for the task of "re-proselytising" on characteristically Fascist lines their wavering supporters.

Under his guidance the policy of repression was intensified and the last remnants of civil liberties disappeared. Simultaneously, the constitutional changes outlined above were carried through, the vigorous activity of Farinacci giving valuable aid in preventing effective opposition. At the same time, too, steps were taken to deal with the unreliability of the militia, which was incorporated in the regular forces (though still subject to Mussolini and not to the crown) and brought under full military law.

These measures being completed and the political dangers associated with the Matteotti affair being surmounted, Farinacci is permitted to retire, "his services being no longer required."

The stories current in the English press of a personal feud between Farinacci and Federzoni (Minister of the Interior) concentrate on the most superficial aspect of the matter. These two men are probably rivals for the succession to Mussolini when his career closes, and their hostility has thus a personal side. But the fact which has real significance in current history is that Farinacci represents the interests of the agrarians (always the violent militant element in Fascism) while Federzoni is the nominee of the financiers and industrialists and specifically of the Federation of Italian Industries.

The clue to the tangled threads of Italian events is found in the fact that the industrial capitalists (now co-operating with the bankers) are achieving complete control of the State ; Fascism is their creation and its successive "waves" are the stages in the process whereby the other social classes are worsted in the struggle for power.

The working classes have been defeated in the manner outlined above. The peasantry, whose main political expression was

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the Popular (Catholic) Party, are now largely disorganised; the proletarian parties have captured a small section (particularly the Communists through their Workers' and Peasants' Councils) but the bulk have drifted to Fascism or are not organised at all. The Aventine opposition, expressive of middle-class aspirations, destroyed itself by its foolish tactic of abstention from Parliamentary activity. Thus the opposition to Fascism has been removed by force or by guile, while at the same time the social elements supporting Mussolini have been consolidating themselves. Finance and heavy industry now march hand-in-hand.

The efforts which have been made to stabilise the lira are an indication at one and the same time of this increasing unity among the governing classes of Italy and of their dependence upon American and English bankers. The investment of capital in Italian industry (essential for any development) on the part of American financiers was naturally made conditional on the establishment of stable economic conditions.

As the Fascist *Popolo d'Italia* said :—

> The Fascist Government is the best guarantee to the American financiers that the money they are going to put into Italian industries will yield them good, durable and safe interests and profits.

The exporting manufacturers desired a policy of inflation, which would favour purchases by foreigners, but they were induced to forego their own immediate interests for the sake of the bourgeoisie as a whole.

The settlement of the Italian debts to the American and English Governments was a further indication of the necessity for regularising the exchange so as to enable capital investments to be made on a secure basis. Other factors, to be dealt with later, also entered into these settlements, but the economic one mentioned here was the dominant consideration especially in the case of America. Only 25 per cent. of the Italian debt to the U.S.A. is to be repaid, as against 76 per cent. of the British and 45 per cent. of the Belgian debts to the same country.

This leads us now to the final and supreme factor in the politics of Fascism, and the overwhelming proof of the class

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character of this movement as an expression of the interests of the manipulators of finance-capital, viz., the foreign policy of the Fascist government.

Italy to-day exhibits the inevitable tendency of a country dominated by finance-capital to develop an imperialist policy. The home market is no longer adequate for the absorption of the products of the steel and other manufacturers, nor are sufficient purchasers to be found among other industrial countries. Colonial markets must therefore be secured, and a policy of imperialist expansion has arisen as the official attitude of Fascism. Behind the romantic phraseology of Mussolini about the revival of Italy's greatness, "Queen of the Mediterranean," and so forth, lie the plain facts that the domination of the North African and other colonial areas is essential for the immediate objective of absorbing the manufactured articles of the Italian capitalists, and (at a stage which is now only commencing) for the investment of surplus capital arising from the profits of Italian industry.

At the same time another factor is operating. Italy herself is becoming a colony of American finance, in the sense that the workers of Italy are to be used as a market for the consumption of American manufactured articles, and, more important, that Italy is to be used as a field for the investment of American capital. Italy is being "Dawesised." As the necessary price of American capitalist intervention, the standard of working-class living is being brought still lower. Real wages are still falling and all protection of hours of labour has gone by the board. The defences of the workers have been removed by terror and by capitalist law.

The imperialist policy finds expression in a jingoism as extreme as the pre-war utterances of German junkers. Fascist politicians and the press put forward fantastic demands for the Italianisation of Tunis, of Nice, of Corsica, of Savoy. An anti-French tone is given to all writings on foreign affairs. Liberal pacifism is discredited and the glories of war are sung in a rhapsody of question-begging phrases. War is the natural climax of Mussolini's present policy and he faces this fact without misgiving. Jingoism is a valuable dope for the workers, which the Fascists use to the full. Nor are they blind to the benefit they would secure from the actual outbreak of war, which would divert the masses from

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internal affairs and harness them more securely to the yoke of imperialism, while at the same time providing markets for the products of the steel manufacturers and State loans for the money-lenders.

The policy of sitting on the safety-valve has been carried through more completely and relentlessly by the rulers of Italy than in any other country of recent years. The opposition is smashed. But signs are yet visible which indicate the lines on which Fascism will ultimately break up. In the first place, no propaganda, no jingo dope, can conceal the plain and inevitable consequences of the control of Italy by capitalists in the interests of their class and that of their comrades from Wall Street and London. The cost of living, in terms of wages, remains at a fantastically high figure. It is difficult to obtain recent statistics (an Italian journal was sequestrated for publishing cost-of-living figures), but at October, 1925, the index showed an increase of 572 per cent. on 1913 figures, and it had shown a constant upward movement throughout that year.

This degradation of the workers cannot go beyond a certain point, without provoking a revolt. The middle-class opposition to Fascism is smashed for ever. No Liberal revival in Italy is conceivable. The capitalists and the workers are face to face. The constitutional Socialists, having thrown in their lot with the middle-class opponents of Mussolini, have shared in their ruin, and they are not likely to regain their ascendancy over the workers. Until a genuine workers' organisation (of which the Italian Communist Party is the only conceivable nucleus to-day) can be re-established, Fascism will remain triumphant. The question is whether the workers will assert themselves before Fascism leads to its inevitable climax in an imperialist war, or whether this catastrophe will have to supervene before the capitalists are finally driven from power in Italy.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRADES COUNCILS

By TOM QUELCH

THE pressure of events on the Trade Unions since the close of the war has emphasised the need of having in the towns and districts central bodies which will be something more than electoral agencies. The local Labour Parties have been found wanting. Their complete pre-occupation with Municipal and Parliamentary affairs, the contesting of elections, the selection and running of candidates, and so on, to the exclusion of the more intimate, and more immediate, day to day, wage and working conditions struggles of the workers, in which the Trade Unions and their branches have been engaged, has compelled the workers to realise their insufficiency and to seek to establish a wider central local organ. Whatever at present exists, in the way of working-class organisation in the localities, is largely, preponderatingly, Trade Union. The main bulk of the local movements consists of the Trade Union branches. It was only to be expected that when the Trade Unions became engaged in serious struggles—fierce, life-and-death struggles such as we have had since Black Friday—that the Trade Unionists would be made to discover the complete lack of industrial strength, and interest, in the local Labour Parties.

Hence the great revival of the Trades Councils.

But this revival has not meant a diminution in the political consciousness of the workers. The experiences and the lessons of the past have not been suddenly forgotten. The workers are not less aware of the need for working-class political action. On the contrary. The growth of the Labour Party, the growth of the Labour vote—the very fact of having had for a short spell a Labour Government—all indicate that the workers are becoming increasingly interested in politics, and that their political consciousness is being intensified. The revival of the Trades Councils has not meant a swing of the pendulum from political to industrial interest and activity. There has been no swing back : no pendulum. It

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has been rather a groping towards a central local body which will be of service both politically and industrially : which will serve both wings of the movement, and which will neglect no weapon in the workers' armoury.

More than that. Events have compelled a keen all-round examination of the organised working-class movement. And, in consequence, questions have been raised as to how the co-operative movement, the women's and youths' movements, the educational movement, such organisations as those of the Workmen's Clubs, etc., can all be made to fit into the general mosaic of a single unified movement, concentrated in the localities under the central leadership of the Trades Council. Time has proved that all these movements, born of the class struggle, toilsomely and painfully evolved through long historical processes, are all phases of the one movement. They each and all have their part to play. They each and all can be of service in the class struggle. Thus, gradually, there has arisen a conception of a central local body which will gather all sections and phases together, which will unite them and lead them into action on general issues. The Trades Councils of to-day are endeavouring to become, not Trades Councils of loosely-affiliated Trade Union branches as they were in the dim past, not local Labour Parties only, as they have been during the present generation, but a close combination of all organised working-class factors—Trade Union, political, Co-operative, educational, social and so on—presenting a united front on all issues, in all struggles with the capitalist enemy. As the class struggle proceeds, so the interdependence of the various sections of the movement becomes increasingly apparent. Strikers have to be fed. Hence the discussion as to how far it is possible for the Co-operative movement to act as the commissariat for the Trade Unions.

Strikers have to be supported in their homes, and need to have their fighting morale sustained by the womenfolk—hence the need for bringing the women in the homes into closer relationship with the Trade Union movement. The treatment of the young workers consequent on the curse of unemployment ; the blacklegging of apprentices, the lack, in the movement, of the virility, enthusiasm and audacity of the young : these have been amongst the contributory reasons why the need is felt for the

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youths' movement and the children's movement to be co-ordinated with and developed by the different phases of the adult movement.

The working-class movement in the localities has been, during the past three or four years, embarked upon a continuous voyage of discovery. And it has really been discovering itself. It has seen the need to strengthen the Trade Union movement, and to stop the rapid decline in membership. Hence the " Back to the Unions " campaigns, and the endeavours to establish 100 per cent. organised Trade Union branches. It has seen the need to strengthen the political movement, the co-operative movement ; to bring all workers into the struggle. Hence the campaigns to organise the women and the youth ; hence the quickened interest in the co-operative guilds and societies, in working-class education and so on.

From out of this the Trades Councils have gropingly re-organised their principal functions : (1) to gather together the whole of the organised movement, and (2) to use that organised movement as a great machine for organising the unorganised.

Sooner or later there was bound to be a reaction against the centralisation of the Trade Union and working-class movement generally. The big unions have concentrated their forces nationally, and have built around their head offices powerful bureaucratic machines. The Trade Unions, particularly the General labour unions and such organisations as those of the railwaymen and engineers, have become Gomperised : have established the same kind of control over their memberships, to a large degree, as did the late Samuel Gompers over the American Federation of Labour. Though the fact is not so crudely brutal here as in America, nevertheless, we have our Labour Bosses also. And these Labour Bosses exercise their control, and abuse their power, to a much greater extent than is generally realised. The employers, and the capitalist class generally, exercise a most pernicious influence over many of these Labour Bosses, both industrial and political. The National Council of Employers and Employed, the pet body of the Federation of British Industries for netting and demoralising our Labour Bosses, is very much on a par with the American National Civic Federation. The consequence of this has been that the voices of the localities have been stifled : movements—quite legitimate movements—arising in the branches have been crushed

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at birth, and quite capable and useful men in the towns and districts have been kept down and out, prevented from serving the movement as they might have served it—by the bureaucratic machines. This reaction is now being expressed through the Trades Councils. The Trades Councils will, as they increase in size and power, serve as a balance to this central domination, and will provide a fruitful field of activity to the energetic and willing men and women.

When the General Council of the Trades Union Congress seriously contemplated doing something it was compelled to recognise the Trades Councils. Without the Trades Councils the General Council is like a head without its body. The roots, the foundations, of the movement, are in the localities. National unity of action is obviously impossible without local unity of action. The vague, hesitating and nervous manner in which the General Council has proceeded with its relations and work in regard to the Trades Councils is indicative of the fear the Central Labour Bosses have of raising competitive factors. The Trades Councils have been treated like unwanted babies, and have been gathered into the fold as much out of anxiety lest some such organisation as the National Minority Movement should exercise undue influence over them than anything else. The General Council will be lax in giving them that recognition and standing which is their due. It will endeavour to shepherd them along "sure and safe" channels of local futility: anything, so long as they do not challenge the vested interests and power of the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy. It will endeavour to impose fixed constitutions upon them, to crop and shear them, to confine their activities, and render them docile, malleable and subservient. In spite of this Official attitude towards the Trades Councils, we are confident that they are destined to grow immeasurably, and to increase in power and importance. The springs of life are in the localities: the new blood, the new ideas, the new methods all come from the towns and districts. The national central bodies are woefully conservative, lacking in initiative, and increasingly subject to capitalist pressure and influence. The most remarkable historical fact of the times in which we live has been the glaring incompetence of the Trade Union leaders and central executive

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since Black Friday, and through the long period of the crushing capitalist offensive which has since followed. For the past five years these leaders and officials have witnessed the battering of their organisations—the flogging of them " from Dan to Beersheba "—and have done nothing but lie down to it, to accept it, with many words and much fluttering, but never a sensible attempt, apart from that of last July, to make a determined fight. And the stand of last July was more consequent upon the hammering these leaders and central executives received from the rank and file than anything else. The real spirit and progressive urge of the movement is in the localities. This is made evident by the living interest which the local Labour Parties give to Labour Party Conferences, which would, otherwise, be dull and dreary beyond imagining.

The Trades Councils are necessarily going to increase in power and importance because they are definitely emerging as organs of the class struggle. Being central bodies, covering all sections, they must inevitably think and act for the working class as a whole—as a class. They, as the resolutions passed by the recent Trades Councils Conference demonstrate, are definitely setting about the intensive re-organisation of their towns and districts by getting within the industrial fabric and establishing workshop organisations. In every direction they are seeking for means to bring all workers, no matter what their age or sex, into the movement : there to encourage them to participate actively in the work of the Councils and to train and discipline themselves for the struggle. The Trades Councils are free from that network of corrupting capitalist influences which besiege the central bodies, and which dangle place and position, P.C.'s and Government jobs, and all manner of shoddy honours and more substantial rewards before the eyes of the leaders. The Trades Councils are in and of the rank and file, are, necessarily, truly expressive of real working-class thought and feeling. As organising bodies, as propagandist and educational bodies, as fighting bodies, the Trades Councils are destined to win to the leading position in the movement, and to be in the van of the workers' struggle for emancipation.

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The World of Labour

INTERNATIONAL

Enlarged Executive Meeting of the Communist International

A SESSION of the enlarged E.C.C.I. opened in Moscow on February 17. The chief items of the Agenda were :—

(1) Report of the Executive.
(2) The Trade Union Question.
(3) Report of the Communist Party of Great Britain.
(4) Work of the sections in the East, in France, America and Scandinavia.
(5) Future work of the Executive up to the Sixth Congress, including means of increasing the influence of the various sections in the Executive.

The importance of developments in the East was emphasised by the addresses of greeting to the first session by a member of the Communist Party of China and by fraternal delegates from the Kuomintang Party and the Mongolian Revolutionary People's Party.

The report of the Executive dealt with the World economic and political situation, and the general tasks and line of policy to be pursued in consequence of recent developments. The situation of European capitalism was described in the most general way as one of " stabilisation " but it was emphasised that the stabilisation was to be regarded as of a partial and temporary character, and that it was at the moment rather less firm and well established than a year before, when this description was first adopted. This is shown by the current economic crises in France, Germany, Poland, and Britain, and the recent acceleration of the revolt of the colonial peoples. The Communist International thus continues to base its policy on the decline of capitalism, as opposed to the social-democrats, whose policy is based upon a belief in the permanence of capitalist reconstruction.

Stabilisation is carried out by various methods, involving " nationalisation of production," inflation, deflation, borrowing of capital, which have the common feature that they react adversely upon the position of the working class, and to some extent, of the peasantry. Thus in " stabilised " Europe the situation is that there is an apparently permanent unemployment crisis—the number of unemployed is at least five millions, the level of wages is considerably lower than before the war, the burden of taxation is increased, the indebtedness to America increases ; and these conditions alone are equivalent to a revolutionising of the situation.

The two most important features of stabilisation then are the increased exploitation of the workers, and the tendency of the capitalists to obtain assistance from the United States. These supply the key to the understanding

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of two important changes now becoming manifest in the European labour movement, the "leftward" turn of the working class, and the tendency on the part of the trade union and social-democratic leaders to turn to America for guidance. On the one hand the increasingly revolutionary working class shows its sympathy for the successes of the Soviet Republics in their economic reconstruction, and on the other hand the old stratum of leaders seeks salvation in the economic successes of the still rising American Imperialism, endeavouring to obtain the affiliation of the openly imperialist American Federation of Labour to Amsterdam, and even introducing American systems of class-collaboration into Europe. On the other hand, however, the increasing economic and political control of Europe exercised by the United States is leading to the formation of a West European *bloc*, a defensive alliance against American Imperialism. This naturally tends to fall under the leadership of Britain, whose growing conflict of interests with America is one of the most important features of the world situation. The Locarno Pact, in addition to its anti-Soviet orientation, exhibits this tendency, and it is to be noticed that the Second International is enthusiastic in its support of Locarno.

To meet this situation, the International put forward the slogan "The United States of Socialist Europe," which expresses the correct working-class policy in opposition to this spurious internationalism of the League of Nations and contemporary bourgeois policy. In conjunction with the support of the Soviet Republic and of the colonial revolutionary movements, this represents broadly the present line of action of the International.

In view of the incalculable nature of the era of "stabilisation," it is necessary to keep in view the two possibilities of a relatively slow and of a rapid maturing of revoluntionary conflicts. It is further impossible at the moment to predict the course or path of revolutionary development. The present era must be utilised by the Communist Parties for winning over to their side the majority of the working class. It can be claimed that substantial gains have been made among the vanguard of the workers, and a proper employment of the "United Front" tactic, in the use of which important advances have recently been made, will enable this to be done in the existing favourable circumstances.

In the most important sphere in which this tactic is to be applied, the trade unions, the report pointed out that many important changes have occurred within the last eighteen months, principally in the direction of a *rapprochement* on the one hand with the Soviet Trade Unions, and on the other with the American Federation of Labour. There has further to be recorded a very marked growth in the organisation of workers in the colonial countries. There is a strong feeling developing in favour of national and international unity of the trade union movement, and the effort in this direction must be continued and extended. It was emphasised, however, that while the R.I.L.U. and its sections continue to exist, everything must be done to strengthen them, as this in itself promotes the cause of unity. While the negotiations between Moscow and Amsterdam have for the time being broken down, the R.I.L.U. having reached the limit of its possible concessions, the fight must be carried on by other means, in particular by en-

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couraging the left wing movements which are crystallising in many reformist unions.

Much detailed discussion took place on this and related subjects. The discussion on the British situation emphasised as the most important features the loss of the former British hegemony to the United States, and the industrialisation of the colonies. These continue to bring about a weakening of the industrial position of the British capitalists.

This situation, in connection with the attempts of the capitalists to regain their former positions by attacking the working class, with the experience of the MacDonald Government and the example of the Soviet Union, produce a definite revolutionising of the British working class. The chief symptoms are: the growth of a "left" tendency in the trade unions—the minority movement and the decisions of the Scarborough Congress; the campaign for international trade union unity; "Red Friday"; the beginning of the formation of a left wing in the Labour Party, and its opposition to the Liverpool Conference decisions; the campaign for the release of the prisoners; the movement in the I.L.P. for the united front; the evident increase in the influence of the Communist Party.

Most of these indicate successes for the policy of the British Party, to be attributed to (1) the absence of fractional struggles within it. (2) The effectiveness of its trade union work. (3) The close connection maintained with the mass of workers generally. (4) The effort to obtain acceptance in the Labour Party. (5) A correct policy in relation to the unemployed workers. (6) The effective campaign for trade union unity. (7) The effective assistance given to the miners. (8) The campaign for propaganda in the armed forces. The future tasks of the Party consist in pursuing these former lines of activity and in addition in intensification of its colonial work, the pushing forward of reorganisation on the basis of factory groups, the formulation of a policy for the agricultural population, and the achievement of an increase in the Party membership.

Among other matters discussed at the Session one of the most important was the activity of the Workers' Party of America. The objective circumstances in the United States are not wholly unfavourable for the Party, in particular the recent policy of the Republican Party in discarding the petty-bourgeois sections of its members and programme in the interests of finance capital. The Workers' Party must take advantage of this state of things in supporting the movement for the formation of the Farmer-labour Party, and must support the anti-trust agitation of the middle-class and farmers. Further it must assist still more the left wing in the trade unions in particular in connection with the most recent methods of class-collaboration adopted by American capital, *e.g.*, in the "Company Unions." It must also concentrate on securing a better hold on the heavy industry where it is still comparatively weak. Perhaps the most important task is in connection with American Imperialism; the Party must take up the defence of the South American states and other colonies against the imperialist agression of American capital and the American Federation of Labour.

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